THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. January 21, 1944 Tebet 25, 5704 No. 19

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RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST FELLOWSHIP

REALITIES AND VALUES

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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Both are known to our readers from past contributions to our magazine.

WITH ALL DUE MODESTY

From a Rabbi

I have been carrying on an interesting experiment with a young people's discussion class. . . . We have taken the pamphlet, "Toward a Guide for Ritual Usage" as a text. . . . Since there are young folk from Reform, Conservative and Orthodox backgrounds in the class, we've had very lively discussions. . . . It has stimulated them immensely.

From a reader on the Pacific Coast

We read your material with great interest. We find your movement very interesting and hope it will grow steadily.

From another of our readers

I can't tell you in words what deep satisfaction and pleasure I experience in reading every issue of *The Reconstructionist*. May God give you all the strength and inspiration to continue your essential work!

THE JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION, Inc.

has the honor of announcing for early publication

A PRAYER BOOK FOR FRIDAY EVENING AND SABBATH MORNING

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This is a truly creative work. It is scheduled for publication before the Fall of 1944.

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EDITORIALS

THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE AND THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

THE Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference has issued a lengthy indictment of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe. The document traces the history of the Emergency Committee through several metamorphoses, identifies the leaders as men and women who spurn the discipline of established organizations, questions the proper disposition of the funds collected by the committee in various fund-raising efforts, and pleads for the repudiation of the Committee in favor of the Conference as spokesman for American Israel.

The statement is written in a calm and judicious manner. There is no rancor in it. The authors are apparently interested in spreading a knowledge of the facts; and the facts are given; that is to say, the bare facts of the Committee's history are given, and they are incontrovertible. But there is a large body of facts not included in that statement which merit our attention. These facts bear upon the rapid growth of the Emergency Committee throughout the land.

Nature abhors a vacuum; and Jewish life is not exempt from this principle. Undoubtedly, a vacuum existed into which the Emergency Committee rushed. It was a vacuum created by many years of ineffective activity on the part of Zionist bodies and philanthropic organizations. Particularly, during these last five years, American Jews have experienced a peculiar urge to arise and do something. That urge of theirs could have been set at rest by the mere knowledge that vigorous and forthright action was being taken in their name.

But no such satisfaction was forthcoming. American Jews were not asked to do anything, except to make the same round of contributions to the same number of organizations. And, what is more serious, they never had the feeling that vigorous action was being taken in their name. To be sure, our leaders, during all this time, were working very hard, contacting eminent political personalities, influencing important individuals in many walks of life, submitting memoranda. But the home front was neglected! The rank and file of American Jews were not informed of these activities. With all the democratic machinery in action, the effect of the political work was no different from that of the old *shtadlanut* upon those in whose name this work was done.

The result was that a small group of men and women, who understood the

psychology of the masses, were able to reach out to them, arouse them, win their support, and challenge the august authority of the American Jewish Conference. They filled the vacuum left by the respectable, official and established organizations.

Naturally, the kind of independent action engaged in by the Emergency Committee, the absence of a responsible membership body, the frequent shifting of purposes and names, all needed to be exposed; this has now been properly done. But let us not suppose that this is the end, that the American Jewish community, having heard the indictment, will now wash its hands of this ugly mess. Let us not be misled into thinking that a carefully prepared scolding, such as was administered by the Interim Committee, is going to deal a death-blow to the Emergency Committee, or to any other similar reincarnation of this Committee in the future.

The conditions that gave rise to the Emergency Committee will continue to nourish it. Unless those conditions are removed, Emergency Committees and their ilk will continue to flourish. This means that the American Jewish Conference, the Zionist Organizations, and even the philanthropic bodies will have to develop the human touch, which they lack, even though some of them may have wide popular support. The masses want opportunities to see their cause dramatically and forcefully presented to the world. The masses somehow sense that things cannot be worse than they are now, and their instincts tell them that now is the time for all-out demands.

There are two alternative methods in dealing with these "front" organizations: one is to take them in as partners, the other is to steal their thunder. Have the Zionists attempted to take these people of the Emergency Committee in as partners? If so, what happened? What were the terms? Why did negotiations break down? Has the public ever been fully informed of such negotiations?

If a merging of forces is out of the question, why do not the opponents of the Committee undertake to fill the vacuum that has been created? Why do they not make more use of the emotional and dramatic appeal so effectively used by the Committee? There is no inherent and necessary connection between effective methods and lack of integrity. In a previous issue, we asked why all the good tunes should be used by the Devil? We repeat, if our recognized and respected organizations were fully alert, they would attract the "many men and women of good will" who are now serving the Committee.

But if neither course is followed and the Conference continues to issue periodical denunciations without introducing any change from present methods, there can be but one result—the perpetuation of the status quo, and the lessening of the prestige of authoritative bodies, because the denunciations will be utterly ineffective.

OUTLAWING GROUP LIBEL

AFTER two days of testimony the House Post-office and Post Roads Committee concluded hearings on HR 2328, introduced by Congressman Lynch, and Joint Resolution 49, introduced by Congressman Dickstein. It is expected that these measures will be favorably reported. The Lynch Bill provides that the criminal code be amended to declare non-mailable all written matter and pictures containing any defamatory and false statement which tends to expose persons, designated by race or religion, to hatred, contempt, ridicule or obloquy, or tends to cause such persons to be shunned or avoided, or to be injured in their business or occupation. The Dickstein Resolution provides that all written matter and pictures

adapted or intended to cause racial or religious hatred, bigotry or intolerance, or to incite racial or religious hatred, shall be non-mailable. A heavy penalty is imposed for violations in each measure.

The House committee has received more than 15,000 letters in support of the measure. Among those who are sponsoring the Bill and Resolution are the American Jewish Congress, the CIO, the AFL, the editor of *Commonweal,* the editor of *The Jewish Day,* and the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild. On the other hand, the measures are opposed by the Postmaster General, who has stated that such statutes "would violate the principle of free speech, would be unconstitutional, would increase instead of decrease racial prejudice and would present serious administrative difficulties." Also opposed are the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The ACLU and the NAACP state that they are apprehensive that enactment of the measures would lead to a stifling of free expression of grievances, and would impair the constitutional right of petition, free speech and freedom of the press, and would, through the denial of these basic rights, lead to an aggravation of race and religious tensions, which may express themselves in violence and other forms of violation of law.

While the protestations of the Postmaster General, in view of his record of unprecedented mail censorship, in which he has acted as the servant of the National Organization for Decent Literature, directed by Bishop Noll of Fort Wayne, cannot be taken seriously, the position of the ACLU and the NAACP, leading defenders of civil rights of minorities and individuals, must induce serious consideration of the merits of the proposed Congressional enactments.

At the same time, the failure of the prosecution in the Rapid Service Press case in Boston several weeks ago, under the Massachusetts group libel law, enacted in April of 1943, focuses attention on the question whether or not such State legislation is advisable.

In an article in "Columbia Law Review" in May of 1942, Professor David Riesman, of the University of Buffalo Law School, reviewed the legal authorities and arguments, and concluded that the courts should be urged, in cases as they are brought, to extend legal concepts, doctrines and rules to embrace protection of groups against libel; but "for an over-all attack on the problem, and for an alternative where courts cannot be persuaded, we must look to legislation." These recommendations, however, relate only to the civil process, or suits for damages; for Professor Riesman is opposed to the employment of criminal sanctions for group libel. He says: "criminal actions put the defendant, if he is released, in a position of vastly enhanced prestige and increase the contempt of his followers for the weaknesses of democratic processes. If he is convicted, the sentence is short, the cry of martyrdom is an effective cry, where public policy has not prepared the ground for meeting it. . . . The whole of our law . . . favors the criminal defendant." The need for a unanimous verdict, the proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the hardly avoidable politics of the prosecutor's office are among the obstacles to effective prosecution. Along the same line argues Irving Wilner in an article in the February, 1942, "University of Pennsylvania Law Review." "Rather than to cling to the criminal process," he concludes, "which at best is unable to afford private compensation, it is preferable to increase the availability of the ordinary civil process, which, while affording a direct remedy to the injured party, does safeguard the essential right of free expression by allowing the plea of truth as a complete de-

fense and by allowing a broader view of the scope of privileged communication."

Under the Massachusetts statute there must be proof that the publication was with intent maliciously to libel, and the assertions must be false. The Municipal Court judge before whom the Rapid Service Press case came held that there was no proof that the employer had foreknowledge that his employee would print a document in violation of the law, and on this ground gave judgment for the defendant. In 1941 the New Jersey Supreme Court, in *State v. Klapprott,* was called upon to construe the New Jersey Anti-Nazi Law. The Court, in an opinion by the Chief Justice, declared the Act unconstitutional, in that it violated the freedom of speech provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions, and for the reason that it was uncertain, vague and indefinite. The case involved German-American Bund agents, who were charged with having made unprintable speeches against Jews. The Court said that any previous restraint on speech is unconstitutional, and held that a punitive sanction in a statute serves as a previous restraint. Under this holding it is hardly possible to draft an act with criminal sanctions that will pass the constitutional test. The Court relied in part on the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Cantwell vs. Connecticut,* in which it was said that a statute affecting free speech or freedom of the press must be narrowly drawn to define and punish specific conduct constituting a "clear and present danger" to substantive interests of the State. If this principle of the Supreme Court is to be observed, legal experts point out that a proper statute can hardly be framed.

In view of the record of failures in prosecutions in New Jersey and Massachusetts, and in view of the opposition of the ACLU and the NAACP to the passage of Congressional measures, the entire subject of providing criminal sanctions against libel of a race or religious group needs to be carefully reconsidered. There is no point in inviting another tragic failure, especially like the one in New Jersey, where the decision was by a high court. Our conclusion is strengthened by the arguments of Rabbi Solomon A. Fineberg, in an article "Can Anti-Semitism be Outlawed?" in the December, 1943, issue of "Contemporary Jewish Record." Although we have in the past favored legislation outlawing racial and religious libel, and in principle still favor it, we recognize that the matter of implementation through a specific legislative program for Congress and State legislatures must be gone into with extreme caution. Leading lawyers and jurists, representing the ACLU, the NAACP and important Jewish defense groups should be called together for a conference at an early date, with the end in view of achieving a satisfactory guide for action.

A NEGLECTED MOVEMENT

JEWISH organizations functioning on a national or a world-wide scale may be divided into five categories. There are those meeting: 1) *physical needs,* the saving of life, as an end in itself; 2) *defense needs,* the protection of Jewish rights wherever these are in jeopardy, and defense against political, social or economic discrimination; 3) *religious needs,* the programs to maintain and transmit the religious tradition of our people; 4) *cultural needs,* the projection and the encouragement of efforts to foster and protect the cultural contributions of the Jews in art, in literature and in other secular forms; 5) *group-survival needs,* the strengthening of group morale and ethnic consciousness and the reinforcing of ties with Palestine.

A large number of Jewish organiza-

tions owe their strength and following today to the stresses and storms of the past tragic decade, and to the impact of anti-Semitism upon every Jew. National movements do not fall solely in one or another of the five categories, but their primary emphasis may be in one or two categories exclusively. Those whose foundation is laid on adjustments to anti-Semitism lack that measure of positive and affirmative content which assures depth and permanence to the program. They build on negative values.

One movement, which characteristically represents the opposite of this type of motivation, is the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), which held its eighteenth annual conference in New York City, January 7 to 9. It was created some twenty years ago to meet three basic necessities: one, to foster and encourage the use and wider adoption of Yiddish as the language of the Jewish people; two, to engage in scientific research along social, political, economic and psychological lines, in order to provide the knowledge necessary to comprehend our common problems and to meet them with understanding and wisdom, and three, to serve as the repository or the storehouse of as much of the totality of Yiddish literature, in all its forms, as possible. These three purposes are so closely intertwined in the philosophy of YIVO that, to its protagonists, no one of them can live without the other two.

Its interest in the varied aspects of Jewish life is revealed in the subjects of its recent conference: "The Prospects of the American Jews in Post-War Economy," "History and Etymology of *Yortzayt*," "Negroes and Jews," "Stages in Yiddish Literary Criticism," "Jews in the Armed Forces of the United States," "The Economic Structure of the Jews of Poland Before the Partitions," "A Study of Jewish Life in American Jewish Homes," "Jewish Universalism," "Experience and Lessons of Work with Youth Groups," "The Messianic Idea in *Halakah*," "Social and Religious Attitudes of American Jews."

Among YIVO's major contributions in the past year have been its stimulation of published autobiographies of Jewish immigrants, and the history of the Jewish labor movement in the United States. Both are of immeasurable value and will, with the passage of time, be appreciated at their true worth.

An important branch of YIVO's work is its research training division divided into higher and lower levels of specialization. The purpose of these departments is to train scholars in all fields of Jewish research, not only for intellectual pursuits but for communal service as well. The course of study is carried on under charter of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. Although its graduate students are few in number, its curriculum and program are most interesting and its faculty is a large and impressive one.

It is not a little painful to observe that YIVO is almost unknown among the Jews of this country and its support is pitifully small. One reason for this is that YIVO is an intellectual movement. American Jews are allergic to that. Secondly, it makes Yiddish its medium, and therefore appeals primarily to a limited portion of the Jewish masses. The wealthy Jews of America and our Welfare Funds would not understand and appreciate YIVO unless it organized a department to do "missionary" work with these groups. Even then, there is no guarantee that financial support would be forthcoming on the basis either of understanding or of sympathy.

Of this the leaders of YIVO are aware. Yet with undeviating conviction and confidence they carry on. It is a melancholy commentary on the character of organized Jewish life that a movement of such

promise has not been able to attract the backing and support needed to assure the full flowering of its potentialities.

Whose fault is it? Will time remedy this deplorable condition? Is there any future to a movement which dedicates itself with such steadfastness to the building of Jewish dignity and self-respect? Who knows the answers? This neglect is a sad omen for the future. What will survive? Only relief, only Judaism as a Yom Kippur religion, only Jewish philanthropic enterprises?

It is clear that if Jewish life in this country is ever to become positively rather than negatively motivated, such movements as YIVO must have the interest and the support of larger numbers of our people.

REALITIES AND VALUES

We shall await with interest news of the Conference of Midwestern Anglo-Jewish publishers which has been called at the initiative of the enterprising *Indianapolis Jewish Post*. We ourselves some time ago called attention to the desirability of such conferences. Great numbers of Jews get almost all their information about Jewish affairs from the weekly Anglo-Jewish press. These papers are thus capable of exerting no small influence on Jewish life. Their responsibility is commensurate with their potential importance. But with few exceptions, of which the *Indianapolis Jewish Post* is one, they show little awareness of their responsibility. Most of them give the impression of being primarily advertising media with little interest in the creation of an informed Jewish public opinion. Perhaps the Conference will help to remedy this situation. It is to discuss "problems facing Anglo-Jewish publications in this country, including questions of circulation, advertising and editorial work." Under "editorial work," we should like it to include an evaluation of the syndicated special columns that constitute a good part of the literary content of these papers. For we find these columns, for the most part, unspeakably vulgar in their "smart Aleck" wise-cracking and glib commentary on serious Jewish issues. We should like to see the editors do a little more editing instead of printing anything that happens to be sent to them and to be sufficiently entertaining to help sell their advertising. Here's hoping that the Conference will help raise the standard of Jewish journalism in America!

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The Union of American Hebrew Congregations announces the organization of an Institute of Jewish Studies under the joint auspices of itself, its affiliated and auxiliary bodies and of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The corresponding Conservative organizations have a similar institution in the National Academy of Adult Jewish Studies. This is encouraging. At long last, the synagogue is beginning to realize that it must do something for *torah* as well as for the other foundations on which the Jewish world rests, *avodah* and *gemillut hasadim*. So long as the synagogue's interest was confined to worship and philanthropy, it had as unstable a foundation as a two-legged stool, if we can imagine such an object. We hope that the Institute and its sister institution, the National Academy, will succeed in interesting a constantly growing number of adults in extending their knowledge and deepening their understanding of every aspect of Jewish life.

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The Union Avenue Christian Church of St. Louis, Mo., as reported by Religious News Service, has appointed a committee to survey 200 service men to determine how many would require employment after the war, and other committees for job placement and counselor

service. This shows a commendable sense of responsibility for the economic welfare of its men in the service which we hope our Jewish congregations will emulate. They have even more reason to be concerned with the problem than have most Christian churches. For, as a minority group, we Jews must expect to encounter a more difficult placement problem than most Gentiles. We can moreover think of nothing that would do more to enhance the prestige of the synagogue in the eyes of our demobilized service men than its effective concern with their economic readjustment to civilian life. It is none too early now to begin planning.

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ARTHUR KOESTLER, THE GIFTED novelist, writing recently in the New York Times, reported that a public opinion survey had concluded that nine out of ten Americans think the Nazi atrocities "propaganda lies" and don't believe a word of them. Koestler cries out against those who refuse to acknowledge that the nightmare of mass slaughter is a reality. We believe the best—and perhaps the only—way Americans of good will can be convinced of the reality of the nightmare is for them to read, even to glance through, the "Black Book of Polish Jewry," issued under the auspices of the Amercian Federation for Polish Jews. The photographs, many of them smuggled out of Poland, are ghastly. Readers are not promised a good night's sleep after viewing them. But American readers will do much better losing sleep once in a while over photographs of butchered Jewish children, than over coming home too late from a nightclub.

POOR ARTHUR HAYS SULZberger! What a lonely man he must be. In a letter to Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, he tells how he changed over from a non-Zionist to an anti-Zionist — and then he had to "withdraw his support" from the anti-Zionists, the American Council for Judaism, because they issued their well-known statement during the convening of the Conference. On the other hand, he was compelled to resign from the Executive Committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations because they recognized the Conference and sent delegates. Mr. Sulzberger felt that Jews should not recognize a gathering for any other than "religious purposes." Where does that leave Mr. Sulzberger: not with the Zionists, not with the Reform religionists, not with the Conference.

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A RECENT DISPATCH, VIA THE Jewish Telegraphic Agency, from Washington, informs us that hereafter Palestinians, residing in the United States, will no longer have the status of neutral aliens, but that of co-belligerent aliens. This means that Palestinians, within the draft age, will be inducted into the American army. If this dispatch is accurate, it implies that a change has occurred in the status of Palestine. A bit of research on our part has yielded no results. Perhaps some of our readers can throw light on the matter. In the meantime, we are informed that a battalion of Polish Jews are fighting under their own flag, and with their own insignia, against the Nazis. If the Palestinians should be transformed into co-belligerents, the question of the Jewish army may be revived.

Dr. George J. Gordon—Builder of a Community

By ALBERT I. GORDON

"ALTHOUGH the individual is dominated and shaped by his social environment, he is not obliterated by it. Under favorable conditions he can even change and mould it. Thus the personality of an outstanding individual, such as a religious leader, may leave a mark upon his society which will endure for generations."

The truth of Ralph Linton's words (*The Study of Man,* by Ralph Linton, p. 96) is readily understood when they are considered in connection with the life and career of Dr. George J. Gordon, late director of the Minneapolis Talmud Torah, who passed away on Tammuz 23, 5703 (July 26, 1943). For it was Dr. Gordon, more than any other person, who changed Minneapolis Jewry from a chaotic mass of individuals, each going his own way, and helped to mould it into a well organized community, dedicated to the preservation and development of the culture and way of life that is Israel's.

The Institution Built Up by Dr. Gordon

The unified, city-wide Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, founded by Dr. Gordon and so ably directed by him, has since its establishment in 1911, been a source of pride not only to local Jewry but to Jewish educators and rabbis throughout the nation. Some of its graduates who received their first intensive Hebrew training within its walls now serve many American Jewish communities as rabbis and teachers. Others, the vast majority, constitute the "followers" whose zeal for Judaism and understanding of its nature have caused many an educator to regard Minneapolis as an oasis of Hebraic culture in the cultural desert of American Jewry. One can well understand the amazement of Jewish educators when they discover that, in this community of approximately 18,000 Jewish souls, there were at one time as many as 900 Jewish boys and girls, and today approximately 700, who regard it as perfectly normal to spend five afternoons a week studying the language, culture and traditions of their people. This they do under the guidance of expert and truly consecrated teachers in a school building which is the equal of most public schools. When we consider that, since its founding over thirteen years ago, the Minneapolis Federation for Jewish Service has allocated a goodly proportion of its funds for the maintenance of this institution, we may justly surmise that all elements within the local Jewish community, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, look upon the Minneapolis Talmud Torah with favor. One has but to compare the attitudes of most Jewish communities, as expressed through boards of welfare funds, etc., to Talmud Torahs with the acknowledged liberality of the Minneapolis Federation toward the Minneapolis Talmud Torah, to appreciate the honored position of Jewish education in this community.

If we are to answer the question: "How did all of this come about?" we must inevitably turn to the life story of Dr. George J. Gordon, who, more than any other man, must be credited with the idealism, determination, tact and good common sense that helped to change the course of Jewish life in his adopted city.

Aware of the unusual role that Dr. Gordon had played in the moulding and building of the Minneapolis Jewish community, the writer, some time ago, invited Dr. Gordon to narrate the story of his life and to point out, wherever possible, the changes that had occurred

within the community during the fifty years of his residence. Dr. Gordon spent several days in the writer's study for this purpose. It is on the basis of the information he provided at that time that this account is written.

Gordon's Childhood and Youth in Europe

George Jacob Gordon was born in the city of Neustadt, Lithuania (then part of Russia) on April 15, 1874. His parents were Orthodox Jews who placed a high value upon Hebraic learning. In conversations with the writer some months before he passed away, Dr. Gordon described his mother as "just a Jewish woman who could read only the *siddur* and the *'Taich Chumash,'* though she could speak Yiddish, Lithuanian, some Russian and German, the four languages that were used in her community." Dr. Gordon described his father as a *"talmid hakham."* Though engaged in a small retail business at the time his son was born, he was known as "Berrel der Melammed" in his community because he had taught children and later had acted as instructor in Talmud. Economically, one would term this family as "middle class." Culturally, and it was the cultural level that was deemed most important in the eyes of his fellow townsmen, this family could be regarded as on a fairly high level.

It had been accepted as a fact that when their children grew up, they would emigrate to America. Dr. Gordon pointed out: "My mother told me that she worried about me from the day that I was born. She did not want to have me serve in the Russian army. Aside from the recognition that such service would mean a necessary violation of the dietary laws, she, like most other Jews in Russia, felt that service in the Russian army under the Czar served no purpose. Jews had no rights in Russia; hence they felt no obligations. They knew that Russia's laws were made for everyone except the Jews."

George J. Gordon received his first education in private *hadarim.* He began the study of Talmud at the age of eight. After his Bar Mitzvah, his mother accompanied him to the town of her birth in the county of Telz, where her son attended a small yeshivah and studied Talmud for approximately one year. He then returned to Neustadt, and after a stay of one year, during which time he continued his studies, he proceeded to the yeshivah at Gorzd near the German border. There, he reported, he studied *mussar* (ethical literature). In 1889, at the age of fifteen, George Gordon went to the Yeshivah at Telz and studied under Rabbi Simon Skop for a period of two years. It was during this time that an older brother, who had already gone to America, wrote to him, urging him to study *Yoreh Deah* and to secure *kabbalah* (rabbinic authorization) for *shehitah,* in order that he might find some means for self-maintenance when he came to America. Following this advice, he went to the community of Zager on the Latvian border in order to secure the necessary background. There too, he continued his Talmudic studies by himself. Of this period, he made the interesting observation: "While alone I had the opportunity to study what I liked. It was then that I really began to study Hebrew as a language." He remained in Zager for about a year and a half and then returned to Neustadt.

Dr. Gordon reported that his uncle in Neustadt seemed rather surprised that his father was so much concerned about giving George as fine a Hebrew background as possible. He stated that his uncle asked his father: "Berrel, why are you sending your children to *yeshivot.* They will go to America and become *goyim!"* To which his father replied, with the wit that

later characterized the son, *"Besser aydele goyim vee grobe goyim."*

Immigration to America and Early Adjustments

In 1892, George Gordon's parents took him to Memel, gave him his ticket and he proceeded on the long journey that was to bring him to America. Dr. Gordon called attention to an incident that occurred when the train on which he was riding came to a stop on the outskirts of the city of Berlin. The Jewish émigrés were given a much needed meal by the German Jewish women. He recalled that he heard two of his hostesses speak to each other as follows: "If only the *Ost-Juden* would have behaved themselves in Russia; if only they had a little better manners such as we have in Germany, they would be treated just as well as we are treated here in Germany." What a sad commentary upon human nature.

Three days before Shavuot, in the year 1892, George Gordon arrived in New York on the steamer Wisconsin. For a period of four weeks he resided at the home of a cousin and then he began to look for work. Dr. Gordon described the New York he saw as "a new world." He stated: "I went to the Synagogue on Shavuot. Of course it was an Orthodox Synagogue. I was impressed with it because it seemed so orderly and decorous in comparison with the synagogues I knew. Of course there was not so much devotion and piety as I had expected to see." Dr. Gordon admitted, however, that he too had changed since his days at Telz and believed that his introduction to Haskalah literature during his days at Telz accounted for many of the changes that were to take place in his attitude towards Judaism.

Dr. Gordon found his first employment in America in a paper box factory, but this job lasted for but three months. He then decided to follow the practice of many of his fellow Jews and so he took to peddling. For this venture he proceeded on to Haggerstown, Maryland, the home of an uncle. He peddled in Maryland, in Virginia and throughout the Blue Ridge Mountain area. During this period, he pointed out, "I never peddled on Shabbat. I always looked for a place to stay over Shabbat. Once in the Shenendoah Valley district, I stayed over Shabbat at the home of a woman who was o Seventh Day Adventist. When I offered to pay her, she said: 'You owe me nothing. I enjoy seeing a Jew keep his Sabbath.' I was very much impressed with such liberalism."

Little Americanization work was done in those days. Dr. Gordon knew no English. He was obliged to pick up as much English as he could by contact with those with whom he did business. It was at this point in his life that he suddenly realized that if he were to continue peddling he might forget "everything I ever knew." Then he decided to go West.

Because his mother's cousin lived in Minneapolis, he decided to make the long trip to the Midwest. He arrived in the city of Minneapolis in 1893, just one week before the Pesah festival. He was then nineteen years of age.

The need for funds with which to maintain himself prompted him once again to undertake the task of peddling various articles of dry goods in Western Minnesota. Dr. Gordon reported that he was not very successful in this venture. Characteristic of the man was his comment: "I recall that on Tisha B'Ab of that year I was on a dirt road far away from my dear ones. It was then that I sat down on a fence in that desolate country and read *Ekhah"* (the Book of Lamentations). Apparently nothing, not even his personal vicissitudes, could remove him from his people, Israel.

Just before Rosh Hashanah of that year, Dr. Gordon definitely decided to

give up peddling and began to give Hebrew lessons to a few boys in the city, many of them now responsible members of the Jewish Community. He had determined to gain a secular education, and so at the age of nineteen he entered an elementary school. Just a year later, in 1894, he enrolled in High School and was graduated in 1896.

Gordon As Medical Student and Practitioner

From his very early days he had planned to study for the rabbinate. The more he contemplated the matter the more determined he was to follow that course. However, as a result of the advice of Rabbi M. Friedman, then rabbi of the Reform Temple, he decided to give up this ambition and to enter the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia from which an older brother had been graduated.

Dr. Gordon recalled his four years in Philadelphia with genuine pleasure. Very quickly he found other likeminded young men who were very much interested in Zionism and Hebrew learning and with them he organized a Zionist Society called "Ohavey Zion" which met once a month. The Zionist Congress of 1897 had influenced him and his friends to the point that he was convinced that Zionism was the most vital force making for the survival of the Jewish people. Another society, the "Dorshey Daas" captured his interest also. Among its members were such men as Isaac Husick, Henry Morais, Gershon B. Levi.

After graduating from Medical College in 1900, he returned to Minneapolis and began the practice of medicine. He reported: "I was immediately accepted by the Jews of Minneapolis and it was not long before my practice began to grow. I charged next to nothing for my services because I was determined to get acquainted with people, and I did what I could to help them." From 1900 until 1928, when he forsook the practice of medicine to become the Educational Director of the Talmud Torah, his records indicate that he presided at the birth of over 3,000 Jewish children in this city. Dr. Gordon served on the staffs of several hospitals and was the Chief of Staff in obstetrics in one. He reported that his relationship with the non-Jewish members of the profession had always been excellent.

Although Dr. Gordon modestly neglected to point out that much of his work with his Jewish patients consisted of fatherly advice and in many instances active financial assistance, these facts are well known and are attested by many of his friends and admirers.

Even before he had left Minneapolis for Philadelphia he noticed the tragic plight of both Jewish parents and children in that section of the Jewish community in which he lived. He indicated that in those early days there were several *hadarim* to which parents would send their children. Most of the teachers in these *hadarim* were utterly unqualified for their posts. The schools usually consisted of one dingy room filled with benches where a teacher would attempt to teach ungraded classes. He stated: "Parents looking at their children and seeing how little they knew and how little they cared to know about things Jewish cursed the day they were born. Children did not attend the synagogue with their parents nor did the *heder* provide much of an attraction for them. The loyalty to Jewish learning that had characterized the European Jewish community was here transferred to loyalty to the public schools. Children began to be the breadwinners, and parents, ofttimes economically dependent upon their children, dared not object to their children's attitudes. Conflicts of a serious nature between parents and children were so great that the

hearts of parents were saddened. Parents attempted to apply the kind of disciplinary measures that they knew in Europe. Public school teachers were kindly. The *rebbe* in the *heder* was ofttimes unkempt and a hard disciplinarian. The children studied nothing but mechanical reading. No wonder they 'played hookey' from *heder* regularly and parents could do nothing about it."

Dr. Gordon As Educator and Community Builder

In 1894, little over a year after Dr. Gordon arrived in Minneapolis, he felt the urge to do something about the problem of Jewish education. But a youth of twenty, he did not hesitate to call a meeting of his elders and discuss with them the question, "What shall we teach our children?" It was decided that this small pioneering group would undertake to establish some kind of "modern" *talmud torah.* Although the school was not entirely in keeping with Dr. Gordon's own ideas, he accepted it enthusiastically and helped to maintain this *talmud torah* until, after visiting the school on numerous occasions, he could stomach it no longer. "I organized a revolt against the old *talmud torah.* Inadequate facilities, inadequate teachers, and lack of program—everything caused me to feel that the time had come when we must break with the old type of *heder.* In 1910, as a result of this revolt, the Talmud Torah of Minneapolis can be said to have been established, for it was then that Dr. Gordon, the influential center of a small group of determined and enlightened Jews, wrote to Dr. Judah L. Magnes in New York City and asked him to secure a qualified Hebrew teacher. This letter was apparently referred to Dr. Benderly, who suggested Mr. E. Avin as principal of the school. In February, 1911, a school consisting of four rooms was opened. It was a vast improvement over anything that had ever been offered to Jewish parents and children. This school had an enrollment of approximately 115 children and was maintained by the perseverance and "schnorring," as Dr. Gordon put it, of men such as himself.

It was in 1915 that a large new school building was opened on Eighth Avenue North and Fremont. At that time, 250 children registered. Still there was confusion. Several of the teachers could teach only in Yiddish, whereas it was the will and determination of men like Dr. Gordon that *Ivrit B'Ivrit* be utilized as the basic method. Accordingly, once again, due to Dr. Gordon's leadership and perseverance, and with utter disregard as to the effect his role as champion of a new type of Talmud Torah might have upon his medical practice, he proceeded to make changes in the faculty that resulted in the coming to this community of men like Zemach and Heilicher, now principals of the elementary and high school departments of the Talmud Torah respectively.

Dr. Gordon, above all else, was a determined individual. Once he had set his goal, he refused to permit anything to swerve him from it. His genial personality, his wit, his Hebraic knowledge and, above all, his perseverance, finally caused the community to take notice of this institution. He was aided throughout by a group of men who looked to him as their leader and who followed him wherever he would lead, for no one man could, without able assistance, have brought about the miraculous change both in the methods of Hebrew education and in the attitude toward it on the part of the community.

It should be pointed out that Dr. Gordon's efforts were primarily concerned with the North Side of Minneapolis in which Russian and Lithuanian immigrants predominated. On the West Side of the city, there was the Reform group.

On the South Side there had been established a small, predominately Rumanian Jewish community. Dr. Gordon had been accepted by all elements within the community, both as physician and as one of its Jewish leaders. He feared, however, that the efforts of the members of the West Side (Reform) would in some way, destroy what he had sought to build up on the North Side. Accordingly, he saw to it that the Talmud Torah established a Sunday School whose teachers were chosen from among the first graduates of the Talmud Torah. This school met in the Kenesseth Israel Synagogue on the North Side. He established, too, a social service department in the Talmud Torah to aid needy families in the community, and he secured for it the cooperation of the Jewish Family Welfare Association. He even urged and saw completed the installation of a swimming pool within the Talmud Torah building. By this move, he indicated, he hoped "to liberate the North Side Jewish community from the Temple group." Later, he invited Abraham M. Heller, who was then a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, to conduct High Holy Day Services in the Talmud Torah. This move, he pointed out, was necessitated by the fact that, according to him, there was no Synagogue in the community at that time that could adequately meet the needs of growing Jewish boys and girls who knew and understood Hebrew and who required a modern Synagogue for their needs.

During all of these days, Dr. Gordon was playing an important role in other phases of the Jewish community. He was one of the founders of the Emanuel Cohen Center. He helped to provide the incentive that resulted in the establishment of Beth El Synagogue. He joined and participated in the affairs of Adath Jeshurun Synagogue, of which he was a member of the Board for many years. Nor were the Orthodox Synagogue, Kenesseth Israel, and the Reform Temple Israel unacquainted with his help. In all and to all of these organizations and institutions he gave unstintingly of his effort and of his time.

When, thirteen years ago, the Minneapolis Federation for Jewish Service was founded, Dr. Gordon joined in its work as one of the founders and did not hesitate to ask that the Minneapolis Talmud Torah be included as one of its beneficiaries. Nor did he hesitate, as the need dictated, to visit members of the Jewish community in order to solicit funds. His Zionist interests were always evident. Men came to regard him as the very incarnation of the spirit of Zionism.

His efforts on behalf of the Jewish Family Welfare Association must not go unrecorded. It was he who helped to change the nature of the Jewish Family Welfare, which had been organized in 1909, so that it provided more than relief to its clients. Dr. Gordon pointed out that he helped to include the duties of the old *hakhnasat orehim* and *bikkur holim* in the new and expanded program of this welfare association.

It may be said of him that no phase of Jewish life which offered any hope of our perpetuation and survival as a people was foreign to Dr. Gordon. No institution, no cause that could help to bring life and hope to his people was without the benefit of his services.

Whether the Talmud Torah program in itself, with its emphasis upon the acquisition of Hebrew learning for its own sake, with equality of the sexes as part of its program, was responsible for the miraculous growth of this institution so that by 1930, it could boast of a school population of 900 pupils, or whether it was the personality and the work of Dr. Gordon that helped to engender such confidence in this institution, it is difficult to say. It

appears however that, if the comments of the community as a whole are to be trusted, the personality of Dr. Gordon played a dominant role.

Dr. Gordon was not averse to changing his mind if and when he saw the need for change. When he discovered that not all boys and girls could absorb with equal ease the Hebrew learning that was provided by the *Ivrit b'Ivrit* method, he advocated and later, in the year 1930, he instituted the Dual System whose method was primarily *Ivrit b'Anglit.* When he realized that many of his pupils could, if given the opportunity, be a source of even greater pride to the community were they to have the benefit of more instruction than could be provided in an elementary department, he established a high school department in 1916 and gradually saw its expansion and development to the point that an average of twenty-five pupils have been graduated from this department each year. Further, in 1920, he established the *Bet Hamidrash* for the few boys and girls who could benefit by personal instruction and inspiration, and to them he acted as instructor in Talmud as well as "father confessor." He was responsible for the establishment of the Talmud Torah Alumni Association which now numbers some 1,500 young people and which helps to maintain the loyalty of these graduates not only to the institution from which they were graduated but to Hebrew learning as well. One has but to attend a Talmud Torah graduation when well over a thousand people, parents and friends of the graduates, assemble to witness the impressive ceremonies, to realize how dramatically effective a Talmud Torah can really be in the lives of our people and how it can serve to inspire young and old with the need for Jewish knowledge.

Little wonder then that the Minneapolis Jewish community, by word and deed, pays homage to the memory of this gifted leader—this builder of a community.

At the conclusion of two days of talk and reminiscences of the fifty years spent in the Minneapolis community, Dr. Gordon offered certain comments to the writer that seem to have special meaning for those of us whom he leaves behind. From my records, I note the following comments:

"I would not hesitate to change the entire Hebrew educational system if I felt that, by doing so, I could help to give our Jewish boys and girls a better understanding of their people and what it means to live as a Jew. In my early days, Zionism was the most important thing because it was the only thing that had substance. Today I find that the Synagogue is really coming back into its own, and I believe firmly not only that it will last but that it will grow in strength. I believe that we must, through our schools, make every effort to bring the child closer to the synagogue. The Jewish child should know not only how to read Hebrew. He should know the meaning of what he reads, and he should certainly know the customs and traditions of our people. The masses of our people should, by all means, get a smattering of education (that is all that they will receive in the final analysis) but to the few who are ready and able to absorb and to understand we should be able and willing to give an intensive Hebrew training. I believe that the child should by all means know his *Humash.* To me it is even more important than *Neviim* (Prophets). We have traveled a long way but we still have a great distance to go until we shall have reason to be truly proud of the Jewish training we give our children."

Dr. Gordon himself had gone a long way from that day in 1892 when he arrived in America, to July 28, 1943, when he was laid to rest. The men,

women and children for whom and with whom he labored throughout the past fifty years will not soon forget him. The Minneapolis Jewish community in itself constitutes the monument that gives meaning and substance to his life. "May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing."

Nationalism and Religion in Judaism *

By DAVID POLISH

The Pre-modern Period

JEWISH nationalism, which is the hope for the restoration of a Jewish state in Palestine, was never challenged by any Jewish authority until the French Revolution and Napoleon's Sanhedrin, by whose fiat Israel ceased to be a nation and became a sect. Throughout our development, the religious impulses and the national nostalgia of the Jew kept pace. Epitomizing this is the aphorism attributed by the Rabbis to God, "I shall not enter the heavenly Jerusalem, until Israel enters the earthly Jerusalem." Not only were the national and religious trends parallel but integral, so that no effort was made to establish precise distinctions between the two. There was no rigid borderland separating them and it occurred to no one that they might be mutually exclusive. They were elements of an organic whole which was no more susceptible of artificial division than a statue is susceptible of division between its form and its marble. No one ever suggested that the "kingdom of the house of David" and the "kingdom of heaven" were irreconcilable and, though no sentries patrolled the borders of these kingdoms, none of the *avele Zion* (Mourners of Zion) dared go marauding in the kingdom of God, nor did the keepers of the sanctuary deem it necessary to stamp out patriotism as a preventive or defensive measure.

The osmotic process by which the representatives of each of the two aspects of Judaism could come and go in the domain of the other, by which every Jew was simultaneously a citizen in both realms, has left ample evidence in the Bible and Talmud. The God-enthralled Jeremiah could, without qualms about the membership in the universalist guild, advise his cousin to purchase a tract of Palestinian soil as an act of faith in the restoration of the promised land. The tractate Taanit, with its detailed exposition of the dates of national calamities, posits its discussion about prayers for rain upon the premise of Jewish restoration to Palestine.

This identical process persists in times much closer to our own. It survived long after the physical cords between our people and its land had been severed. A galaxy of God-possessed and Palestine-enraptured men attests to an unbroken sequence down into modern times. In the tenth century, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, vizier to Abd-ur-Rahman III, secure behind the immunities of his office, could write to the king of the Khazars: "Tell me whether you possess a record foretelling the date of those marvelous final events for which we have been waiting these many years during which we have gone from captivity to captivity and from exile to exile. . . . How can I be silent over the destruction of our glorious Temple and over those who passed through flame and water, so that we remained depleted in number, cast down from glory and into exile; we cannot retort when we are

*From a paper read before the Central Conference of American Rabbis, June, 1943.

told all day long, 'Every people has a kingdom, but there is not even a memory of you in the land.' " (Cahana *Antologia Yisreelit,* Vol. I, p. 40, Warsaw, 1922).

Reverberations of Hasdai's religious nationalism go rolling through the ages. They are speeded on their way by an Ibn Gabirol in the eleventh, a Maimonides in the twelfth, a Nahmanides in the thirteenth, a Crescas in the fourteenth centuries. They are echoed in the utterances of an Albo in the fifteenth, a Joseph Nasi in the sixteenth, and a Menasseh ben Israel in the seventeenth centuries. What a narrow crossing from the Spanish Hasdai to the Russian Nachman of Bratzlav! When the latter said to his disciples, "The chief of everything is Palestine," they asked him if he was thinking of a spiritual Palestine. He answered, "No, I mean the real Palestine, with its houses and streets, as we see it with the human eye."

It is redundant to heap citation upon citation, for it is up to any anti-Zionist to find a single contradictory expression in all of Jewish literature throughout this period. Even the schismatic Karaites broke with Rabbinic Judaism in every respect except their attitude to Palestine. Throughout Jewish history, every Jewish principle and dogma, including those concerning the very nature of God and the resurrection of the dead, was scrutinized and debated, but not the principle of the restoration of the Palestinian Jewish state. Not only the Jews but their neighbors and contemporaries recognized the national character of Israel. Not only Luther, Israel's violent accuser, considered the Jews a nation, but also Reuchlin who was well-disposed toward them.

It is clear that Jewish nationalism did not wait for the French Revolution, the Congress of Vienna, or the uprising of 1830, for its origin and growth. Its unique character is summarized by Judah Halevi who associates with the longing for Palestine the Jewish God concept, the Jewish festivals, the Torah, Jewish religious values, and Messianism.

The Modern Period

Just as Jewish religious literature recognizes the national character of Israel, so does secular Jewish literature presuppose the religious nature of Jewish nationalism. Thus, the advent of modern times and the beginning of modern Hebrew literature in the early eighteenth century did not interrupt the nationalist tendency in Jewish thought. The three Luzzatos — Moses, Ephraim, and Samuel David — Moses Mendelssohn, Naftali Herz Wessely, Isaac Baer Schlesinger, Solomon Loewisohn, Solomon Judah Rappaport, and many others give voice to the traditional religious nationalism of Israel. Space permits but two out of scores of corroborating passages. The least nationalistic of these mention is Moses Mendelssohn. Yet, in 1770, in answer to a letter on his attitude to an autonomous Jewish state, Mendelssohn replied that this could come about only as a result of a great international war. Due to the depressed lot of Israel and its loss of vigor, Jews must resort to prayer instead of to direct action. "God . . . has had mercy upon our remnant by giving us His Torah . . . as a support, until . . . He shall raise up the booth of David from the earth and say to the fallen daughter of Zion: Rise to your feet." In 1755 he translated into German Halevi's *Zion Halo Tishali.* Upon reading the translation, Goethe said, "There is a warmth of yearning in this elegy, found in but few poems."

One of Samuel David Luzzato's many Zionistic poems, written from 1815 to 1818, reads:

"How long, O Lord, shall our land be the possession of a merciless people, while Thy first born dwell amidst captivity and murder at the hands of their overpower-

ing foes? Regard Jacob who cries out from his prison. Have mercy and say, 'Rejoice O child of Jerusalem. In a little while the wrath shall cease, and these things shall not befall you in your own land.'" (Kinor Naim, p. 64, Padua 1879).

During this period, too, the national character of Israel was generally recognized by non-Jews. Joseph, Prince de Ligne, David Hartley, Lord Shaftesbury, and many others outlined plans for the return of the Jews to Palestine.

We have indicated the unbroken continuity of Jewish nationalism as it developed prior to the burgeoning of European nationalism. We have observed how its character was one with the deepest religious ideals of Judaism. By 1830, nationalism became "a widely contagious and fiercely effective force in European society." At this juncture and in some quarters, the utterance of Jewish nationalists become suspect on the grounds that they are tainted with the European disease. No one will challenge their contiguity with the thought of European nationalists. Yet to dismiss their own contributions to Jewish nationalism as parodies of Europe's jingo professors is unwarranted. A careful study of the leading exponents of Jewish nationalism from 1830 will reveal a consistent adherence to the traditional elements in Jewish nationalism. While much of the form is decidedly European, the inner texture is Jewish. In 1836 Nachman Krochmal began his *Moreh Nevukhe Haz'man.* Its indebtedness to Hegel in its philosophic scaffolding is unmistakable. "We must consider," says Hegel, "the shape which the perfect embodiment of spirit assumes —the State. . . . The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth." Now note Krochmal's approach to the state. The greatest type of society is the nation, he says. In every nation the members devote themselves to attaining the highest degree of spiritual proficiency. This expresses itself in culture, arts and crafts. Transcending these, however, are the recognition and worship of God. While the spirituality of other nations who strive for beauty, wisdom, or power, is transitory, Israel's is everlasting because it is absolute and "the source of all spirituality." It is undeniable that Krochmal considered Israel a nation, and was concerned with the rebirth of the Jewish state. "Their power (i.e., the power of the Jews) was crushed to earth, deprived of all those material and spiritual benefits which are necessary for the tranquil existence of a nation in its own territory." (*Moreh Nevukhe Haz'man,* p. 22, Lemberg, 1863).

Almost identical sentiments are expressed by Isaac Baer Levinson in his *Zerubbavel* and by Samuel David Luzzatto in his letters.

The three leading literary exponents of pre-Herzl Zionism, who are most misrepresented as secularists, are Smolenskin, Lilienblum and Ahad Ha'Am. Smolenskin recapitulated his philosophy of Judaism thus: "We are one people and the rules of faith alone are the cornerstone . . . of our national unity. These rules of faith are the belief in One God, the study of Torah in the original . . . the hope for future redemption. . . . If one adheres to these principles, he is for Israel." These ideas are expressed even more vigorously by Lilienblum. Ahad Ha'Am rejects any possible cleavage between Jewish religion and nationalism. "A Jewish nationalism which does not possess any semblance of those things which have been the soul of our nation . . . is such a strange phenomenon that it cannot be imagined." It has been irresponsibly stated that Ahad Ha'Am was concerned with *"geulat hashekhinah"* ("the redemption of the Divine Presence") with spiritual revival and not with *"kibbutz galuyot"* ("the gathering of the exiles.") To the contrary, he indicates

that one specific aspect of Israel's dedication to absolute justice is the idea of Messianism, the fulfillment of that act of justice by which Israel will be restored to its rightful place. Our national consciousness is identified with faith in the ultimate return to Palestine. Without this the Torah is doomed.

Hans Kohn, evaluating modern Zionism, writes, "Zionism as a secular movement arose among the secularized Jewish intelligentsia of central Europe as a reaction to economic and political factors, but it quickly became the form into which was cast the mediaeval religious Zionist fervor of the East European and Oriental Jews."

The Burden of Proof on Anti-Zionist Religionists

It is abundantly clear that Zionism and European nationalism are not blood brothers. Instead, there is an intimate kinship between Jewish assimilation which often passes by the name "universalism," and European nationalism. Modern assimilation came to life after the emergence of European nationalism which advanced Jewish escapism to the dignity of a *weltanschauung,* and afforded fidgety Jews the opportunity of reduced visibility by total immersion in the state. Assimilation is a philosophy, barren and slovenly though it be, of Jewish life. It recognizes a social compact with the state to deliver up the identity of the Jew for a dose of protective coloration. Jewish nationalism and secularism have been deftly juxtaposed against religion and universalism, thus obscuring Zionism's irreconcilable antagonism to that most vulgarly secularist and hypocritical movement in Jewish life—assimilation. Nor does the process stop here. The war on Jewish nationalism in defense of the universal truths of Judaism has all too often been nothing but a flanking movement to achieve a junction with Christianity. These tactics also have their origin in the early period of European nationalism. Ezekiel Kaufman writes, "Through the weakening of our faith which accompanied the *Haskalah,* Christianity gained an advantage over Judaism. The *Haskalah* blazed new paths for apostasy and was the beginning of a conversionist movement which has not yet subsided. The aspirations toward a 'national' religion, implicit in *Haskalah,* minimized the differences between the religions. As a result there was aroused in certain circles of the Diaspora an urge to cross over to the dominant Christianity, particulary to liberal Protestantism." He tells us further, "Even Momsen, an admirer of the Jews, demanded that they surrender their one remaining 'national' characteristic—their religion. For Christianity in his time represented the embodiment of all of human culture, and to stand outside of its borders, while remaining inside the nation, was 'possible, but difficult and fraught with danger.' "

It therefore devolves upon the opponents of Jewish nationalism to bear the burden of proof that Judaism and Jewish nationalism are adversaries. One thing is certain: Jewish nationalism is steeped in ancient and ample precedent. If anti-nationalists insist upon a cleavage where Jewish tradition has detected none, they cannot do so in the name of historical Judaism. They may do so only in the name of their own novel construction of Judaism and in the name of an altogether unprecedented departure from millenia of Jewish thought. This is their prerogative, but in exercising it let them be mindful that they are launched upon a diversion from the unbroken flow of Jewish history. They may take their stand upon what they consider to be the merits of their position, but certainly not upon the merits of the fathers .

Discussion in Theology

GOD AS THE POWER THAT MAKES FOR SALVATION

THE belief in God derives from the intuition that the cosmos may be depended upon to help us achieve salvation. This intuition is as real an experience as our experience of the visible objects around us. The object or datum of this institution comes in the form of a feeling; it lacks the definiteness which the experience of visible objects possesses. This fact explains why the intuition that the cosmos may be depended upon to help us achieve salvation is interpreted in a thousand different ways, depending upon our intellectual, moral and spiritual development. The one thing in common, however, to all these interpretations is the conception of godhood as manifest in the belief in one or in many gods. The conception of godhood answers the universal urge in men to make the most of their lives. But when they try to describe the experience of godhood and the circumstances attending that experience, they do so in all kinds of possible ways. Each group or people interprets its experience of the dependability of the cosmos in accordance with what happens to interest it most. The history of religion is the history of these interpretations.

At the present time, most of the traditional interpretations given to men's intuition or experience of the dependability of the cosmos have come to be unacceptable; they conflict with the now familiar facts about the world and human nature. To deal intelligently with the problem of religion, we must know what gave rise to the erroneous notions which form part of the traditional interpretations of religious experience. We shall then be able to salvage the element of abiding truth that they possess.

In the preceding discussion we stated that all human interests, viewed from the standpoint of the inner drive to make the most of life, or to achieve salvation, fall into three categories. They are the categories of 1) welfare, 2) reason and 3) spirit. These constitute, as it were, three different dimensions of human living. When two wounded soldiers on the battle field find themselves alongside each other with a few precious drops of water in the canteen of only one of them, the tendency of the one who has it to drink it all belongs to the physical interests which we identify under the heading of "welfare." But at that very moment he may be prompted to share it with the wounded soldier next to him. At that moment the need to act ethically and spiritually asserts itself. He would regard himself as contemptible, if he were to ignore his comrade's need. When he shares the water even if it means that he reduces his own chances of surviving, he has lived as a human being more fully than if he managed to survive by not yielding to what we speak of as his higher promptings.

Note the inevitable use of the term "higher prompting" to describe the foregoing situation. The term "higher," applied to the act of kindness in comparison with the tendency to quench one's own thirst, is our way of expressing the fact that the act of kindness belongs to a different order or category of values.

The first important fact we observe when we study the early stages of man's existence on earth is that, during the greater part of it, the welfare interests seemed to monopolize his life. Neverthe-

less, even in the most savage types of society we can discern the beginnings of rational and spiritual interests if we look closely enough. But until very recently, man was unable to differentiate among those interests. As a result he entertained the most bizarre notions concerning the dependability of the cosmos, or of the fact of godhood in the world, and of how to avail himself of that dependability, in order to make the most of his life.

To understand how early man came to worship as gods all kinds of objects both real and imaginary, we must bear in mind that he was for a long time unable to distinguish his social environment from the cosmos as a whole. His social environment included all objects, animate and inanimate, that he saw about him, as well as the human beings living or dead that figured in his consciousness. It was nothing unusual for him to regard sun, moon, stars, trees, springs and animals as members of his own clan or tribe. Insofar as those objects or human beings enabled him to satisfy his yearning for salvation, they were to him the means of experiencing godhood. Even in the more developed stages of civilization, gods are essentially the superhuman members of one's own people or church. By now, even though man has achieved an awareness of cosmic dependability as distinct from the help which he receives from his own group, it is still mainly through his own group that he expects to achieve salvation or to experience the dependability of the cosmos.

The truth is that a full grown awareness of cosmic dependability as transcending national or churchly limitations is the achievement thus far only of a limited number of prophets and philosophers, and of those who accept their teachings. The ancient prophets and philosophers were the harbingers of what we hope will ultimately become a universal awareness of an inner demand to reckon with the dimension of rationality. The philosophers concentrated on the interest in the attainment of truth, in their effort to understand reality as such, apart from the way it is refracted by the physical and the spiritual interests of man. The prophets concentrated on the interest in the attainment of justice, in their effort to free men's dealings with one another from the dominant influence of selfishness and pride.

The effect upon the spiritual interests of the explicit regard for both truth and justice has been to purify those interests of falsehood and group selfishness. When men acquire an interest in truth and justice, they are more likely to cultivate personality for the sake of human dignity and freedom, to maintain social life in a spirit of international unity and responsibility, and to foster religion as a guide to human salvation irrespective of race, people or church.

II

A further noteworthy fact with regard to the experience of cosmic dependability is that it never takes place in a vacuum, as it were, but is always mediated through specific persons, objects, places, events, texts, etc. These media come to be regarded as holy. They become foci of entire patterns of behavior with a wide range of duties and prohibitions. These are the *sancta* which figure in the life of a group, be it tribe, nation or church, as indispensable to the salvation of the group as a whole, and of every one of its members in particular. These same *sancta* constitute the elements which give to any culture or civilization its individual character and differentiate it from other civilizations. The *sancta* are the vehicles through which a culture, a civilization or a religion is transmitted from one generation to another. So long as they are relevant to actual needs and convey an acceptable meaning, they continue to be a source of inspiration for all the forms

of creative activity within the group in whose life they figure as the media of salvation.

There comes a time, however, in the life of a culture or civilization, when the explanations why the particular persons, objects, events, texts should serve as media for experiencing godhood or cosmic dependability are no longer acceptable. If the particular group which has evolved that system of *sancta* has sufficient incentive to preserve its solidarity and individuality, it will refuse to give up those *sancta,* even when the traditional explanations for their being regarded as such are no longer valid. It is then that the process of reinterpretation sets in. The *sancta* are then interpreted figuratively or symbolically, so that they might continue to serve as media for the experience of godhood. Consequently, the growth in rationality or enlightenment is by no means a sufficient cause for the breaking up of historical constellations of *sancta,* or more simply stated, for the liquidation of a historical religion. The fate of a historical religion is entirely in the hands of its adherents. If they possess sufficient intellectual plasticity and moral sympathy to be capable of reinterpreting the *sancta* of the group to which they belong, they can manage to give those *sancta* an indefinite lease on life.

Accordingly, the essential distinction between one religious tradition and another is to be found neither in the conception of God, nor in the interpretation of the experience of cosmic dependability, from the standpoint of salvation. Each religious tradition has its own constellation of *sancta* which has historically served for its adherents as the media for experiencing godhood. From this it follows that there should be as little occasion for referring to a Jewish, or a Christian, or a Mohammedan conception of God as there is now for referring to a Jewish, a Christian or a Mohammedan conception of the earth or the heavens. The *datum* which is the basis for the belief in God is an experience common to all human beings, when they attain a certain stage of mental and social development. The *interpretation of that datum* likewise depends not so much upon the group into which the individual is born, as upon his own general outlook on life. The real distinction between one religion and another is either one of difference in the conception of salvation or one of otherness, that is, one of belonging to another society.

For practical purposes it should be sufficient to trust the spiritual experience of cosmic dependability, or of the immediate awareness of a Power not ourselves, that makes for salvation. The most important problem from that point on is not how to interpret that experience or intuition with a view to rendering it compatible with some particular philosophical outlook on life; this is a problem only for philosophers and theologians. For the generality of mankind, including the philosophers and theologians themselves, the burning problem at the present time is: what constitutes salvation? To be able to answer that question is to know what demands the cosmos makes upon us.

Until modern times there was one uniform conception of salvation. Jews, Christians and Mohammedans were agreed that salvation was unattainable in this world. They were equally agreed that only in the hereafter was the true bliss, which constitutes the life abundant, attainable. The most violent revolution in human history has taken place neither in the political sphere nor in the economic, but in the idea of salvation. The number of those who repudiate the traditional idea of salvation has been increasing in geometric ratio during the last hundred years. The present cataclysm is in a large measure the effect of the conflict of rival theories of this-worldly salvation. The traditional theory of other-worldly salvation

is no longer acceptable. Fascism, Nazism, Communism have come forward with conceptions of this-worldly salvation which have captivated entire nations. If democracy is to make any headway, it will have to become equally articulate and convinced of the particular conception of this-worldly salvation which is compatible with it. Events have proved that the only conception of this-worldly salvation in which it will be possible to organize human life is one in which the spiritual interests that center about the self, society and the cosmos will give rise respectively to the values of 1) the dignity of the human person, 2) the unity of mankind and 3) the transcendence of God as reflected in man's eternal striving to transcend himself.

MORDECAI KAPLAN

Resolution Establishing the Reconstructionist Fellowship

Be It Resolved that we here assembled, at the call of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., in the building of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, on January 9th, 1944, do hereby constitute ourselves the Jewish Reconstructionist Fellowship, dedicated to the furtherance of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization, and

Be It Resolved that we elect an Executive Committee of ten members from not less than five different congregations or communities, to serve for a period of one year or until the next general conference of our Fellowship, and that the Executive Committee be empowered to cooperate with the Board of Directors of the Foundation in organizing chapters of the Fellowship and in all efforts to render effective the work of these chapters.

Be It Further Resolved that the following shall be considered requirements for the admission of chapters into, and their continuance in, the Jewish Reconstructionist Fellowship:

1. The adoption of the Reconstructionist Platform as determining the principles and policies of the chapter.

2. The holding of meetings not less frequently than once a month.

3. The submission of complete reports of its activities to the Executive Committee of the Fellowship at least twice annually.

4. The acceptance as a requirement of admission to mmebership in the chapter, that applicants for membership undertake the following personal commitment:

I. *I shall live my life publicly and privately as a Jew.*

I shall not deny or conceal the fact that I am a Jew. I shall establish a Jewish home that proclaims its Jewishness by Jewish symbols and observances, and the presence of objects of Jewish cultural significance. I shall endeavor to provide for my children the kind of Jewish education which will enable them to be intelligently loyal to the Jewish people and to find satisfaction and happiness in living their lives publicly and privately as Jews.

II. *I shall seek in Judaism the means for spiritual growth.*

I shall endeavor to develop those powers of body, mind and soul by which I can grow in wisdom, in the appreciation of all that is good and beautiful and in the power to help my fellow-men achieve a good and happy life. To this end, I shall seek inspiration and enlightenment in the religious and cultural heritage of the Jewish past and in the best products of intellectual, aesthetic and ethical creativity of contemporary Jewry. And I shall endeavor to cultivate habits of worship, study and meditation for sustaining and developing in myself a personality worthy of the best that there is in Jewish life.

III. *I shall seek the maximum of fellowship and cooperation with other Jews to insure the survival of the Jewish people and the advancement of Jewish civilization.*

To this end, I shall affiliate myself with a Jewish congregation or such other Jewish association or associations as are devoted to the advancement of Judaism. I shall participate in the Zionist effort for the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home in Palestine and in movements that express the solidarity of American Jews with Jews in other parts of the world for promoting their common interest in Jewish survival and in the material and spiritual welfare of our people everywhere. I shall, in all Jewish institutions or associations to which I belong, seek their maximum cooperation with other Jewish institutions for the advancement of Judaism and their maximum contribution to the welfare of the American people and of mankind. And I shall endeavor zealously to guard the honor of Judaism by a life of irreproachable integrity and justice in all human relations, and a patriotic devotion to that American civilization which is the common concern of all religious, cultural and racial groups and communities of American citizens.

IV. *I shall endeavor, in cooperation with other members of the Fellowship enrolled in my chapter to engage in such activities for the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, as the chapter may from time to time determine.*